

REMARKS

Applicants propose to amend claims 1, 5, 7, 8, 14, 20, and 28, and cancel claim 3 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. Support for the amendments can be found in Applicants' Fig. 2 and in Applicants' specification at, for example, paragraphs 019-021, 024, and 030. Upon entry of the amendments, claims 1, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 will be pending.

In the Final Office Action,¹ the Examiner rejected claims 1, 3, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2003/0004874 to Ludwig et al. ("Ludwig") in view of U.S. Publication No. 2004/0111302 to Falk et al. ("Falk") and U.S. Patent No. 6,578,015 to Haseltine et al. ("Haseltine"). Upon entry of the amendments, the rejection of claim 3 will be rendered moot by the cancellation of claim 3.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Ludwig* in view of *Falk* and *Haseltine*. A *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

"The key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103 is the clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious." M.P.E.P. § 2141(III) (8th Ed., Rev. 7, July 2008). "[T]he framework for objective analysis for

¹ The Final Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art, case law, and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Final Office Action.

determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103 is stated in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966). . . . The factual inquiries . . . are as follows:

- (A) [Determining the scope and content of the prior art;]
 - (B) Ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art;
- and
- (C) Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art."

M.P.E.P. § 2141(II). "Office personnel must explain why the difference(s) between the prior art and the claimed invention would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art." M.P.E.P. § 2141(III).

Independent claim 1 calls for a combination including, among other things, a "data field [that] has a first link to a description table comprising identifications of a plurality of states of the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of states" and "the data field has a second link to an instruction table comprising the identifications of the plurality of states and corresponding instructions automatically executable by a computer."

Ludwig discloses: "The system may link the status field to the invoice history page, at which the system may display a full status history for the selected invoice. By default, the system may display the following exemplary columns: payer name, invoice number, due date, status, net amount due, amount to pay, P.O. number, P.O. requisition number, store number, and select." *Ludwig*, para. [0092]. However, *Ludwig* does not disclose that the invoice history page "compris[es] identifications of a plurality of states of the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality

of states," as recited in claim 1, or that the invoice history page "compris[es] the identifications of the plurality of states and corresponding instructions automatically executable by a computer," as recited in claim 1. Therefore, *Ludwig* fails to teach or suggest the "description table" and the "instruction table" of claim 1.

Haseltine discloses, "[a] status table may be generated for the bill, to indicate the current status of the bill." *Haseltine*, col. 3, lines 42-43. However, *Haseltine* does not disclose that the status table "compris[es] identifications of a plurality of states of the processing of the invoice and corresponding descriptions of the plurality of states," as recited in claim 1, or that the status table "compris[es] the identifications of the plurality of states and corresponding instructions automatically executable by a computer," as recited in claim 1. Therefore, *Haseltine* fails to teach or suggest the "description table" and the "instruction table" of claim 1. *Haseltine* thus fails to cure the deficiencies of *Ludwig*.

Regardless of whether the Examiner's characterizations of *Falk* in the Final Office Action are correct, which they are not, *Falk* fails to teach or suggest the "description table" and the "instruction table" of claim 1. Therefore, *Falk* fails to cure the deficiencies of *Ludwig* and *Haseltine*.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the scope and content of the prior art have not been properly determined, and the differences between the prior art and claim 1 have not been properly ascertained. Accordingly, no reason has been clearly articulated as to why the prior art would have rendered claim 1 obvious to one of ordinary skill in the

art. Therefore, a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established with respect to claim 1.

Furthermore, independent claims 8, 14, and 20, although different in scope from claim 1, are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Dependent claims 5-7, 10, 12, 13, 16, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 are allowable at least due to their dependence from one of allowable independent claims 1, 8, 14, and 20. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 1, 5-8, 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20, 22, 24, 25, 28, and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter these amendments under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, placing the pending claims in condition for allowance. Applicants submit that the proposed amendments do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner. Therefore, this response should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Applicants further request that the Examiner enter the amendments for purposes of appeal as the entry of the amendments would place the application in better form for appeal.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge
any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW,
GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

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By:
Peter C. Vi
Reg. No. 61,790
202.408.4485